

Your details

Title

Ms

First name

Bronwyn

Last name

Stow

Submission details

I am making this submission as

A resident in a bushfire-affected area

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public

I give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

I live surrounded by the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, where one of the country's largest fires raged unchecked for weeks on end putting many communities at risk and burning approximately 75% of the World Heritage Area, a staggering 800,000 hectares!! There were many moments when due to the location of all the villages in the Blue Mountains, clustered along a narrow corridor defined by the Great Western Highway, I and my fellow inhabitants felt surrounded by fire to our north and south on both sides of the highway corridor. We were constantly on high alert as the RFS battled courageously and incessantly to keep the fires out of the townships and were in the long run largely successful. Apart from the constant threat, more significantly, the millions of hectares of unique and highly diverse natural landscape and the fauna living within it has been lost. I cried just about every day during the crisis as the extent of the loss of wildlife became apparent, both in our beloved Blue Mountains but also over the whole state of NSW and many other states in the country.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

The principal causes of the unprecedented fire season we have just experienced are the consequences of climate change on our landscapes, creating longer and more pronounced drought and higher temperatures every year, particularly over the warmer months.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Woefully lacking at both state and federal government level and seriously under resourced for both pre-fire season preparation and post season recovery. There seems to be a "let's cross that bridge when we come to it" approach. The governments would appear to be operating as though climate change is not adversely impacting the intensity of the fire seasons we now face annually. See Section 1.3 below for further comment.

1.3 Response to bushfires

There appeared to be a lack of preparedness and cohesive strategy generally both within the responsible NSW Government entities and just as significantly at a Federal government level. Added to this is a significant lack of fire ready/capable infrastructure and equipment. It should in the future be possible to have ongoing surveillance for fire other than relying heavily on the public to report. Also to be ready to launch an attack on the fire breakout that quashes it before it is deemed out of control. It is not acceptable to my mind to allow remote area fires to just run their course and deal with them only when it becomes obvious that townships are threatened. The RFS at that stage has little choice but to put in containment lines and conduct destructive back burning or play catchup with hazard reduction burns. From the point of view of the Greater Blue Mountains, it's world heritage listing has been greatly compromised as a result.

1.4 Any other matters

What I would like to see implemented to reduce the horrific impacts of future intensified fire seasons :

- * Immediate and effective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions first and foremost, with the aim being to exceed the minimum requirements by global treaties
- * Increase fire surveillance by appropriately trained personnel during times of increased risk
- * Increase in firefighting personnel and equipment capable of extinguishing remote area fires promptly and while they can be contained
- * Appropriate risk mitigation procedures put in place as part of the preparation strategy to include non-burning methods of land management and fire resilience of private property
- * All of the above to be properly resourced to ensure best practice and ongoing commitment

Supporting documents or images
